

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-4 and 6 stand rejected as anticipated by PICKARDT et al. (GB 2 201 821).

Claims 9-11 stand rejected as obvious over PICKARDT et al.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under section 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The description of how "afterimages" produce symbols or messages is stated not to be clearly defined, e.g., "How does the flashing of the LED lights of the arrows create the afterimages?"

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation that claims 5, 7, and 8 have been indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter.

As to the question of how LED lights can create symbols and messages using afterimaging, reference is made to Figure 4, which illustrates the phrase "GO!" being displayed, and to the specification. See page 1 (emphasis added):

2. Description Related to the Prior Art

There are symbol display device for a game machine that rotates a mechanical reel having symbols arranged on the periphery thereof, or uses display

devices such as CRT or liquid crystal display to simulate the rotation of the reel. As described in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publications No. H07-000612 and 2002-224265, some symbol display devices have a light emission diode (LED) array to display symbols based on afterimage effect.

See the paragraph spanning pages 1-2 and the paragraph (emphasis added) :

Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-370702, filed by the applicant, describes a rotary disk type symbol display device for a roulette game machine that displays symbols or messages by utilizing **afterimage effect** of the LED array. The rotary disk type symbol display device is composed of a large rotary disk that carries symbols on the periphery thereof and a small rotary disk with the LED array. The large rotary disk and a small rotary disk are placed concentrically. While the rotary disk is rotating, the symbol display device drives the LED array to display symbols or messages by utilizing afterimage effect. Thereby, it is possible to provide various display patterns that improve appeal effect to a player.

In the rotary disk type symbol display device, however, **afterimage effect** is utilized only to display the symbols or messages that do not affect the result of the game. Thus, such symbol display device can not provide various game types, since the game result is determined in the same way as the symbol display device without utilizing **afterimage effect**.

See also the paragraph spanning pages 2-3 (emphasis added) :

In order to achieve the above objects, the symbol display device of the present invention lights on and off light emission elements of a light emission element array on a rotary member to display symbols or messages by utilizing **afterimage effect** while the rotary member is rotating, and the light emission elements lights on to indicate a symbol of the symbol display member and/or to display a specific symbol when the rotary member stops rotating. The symbol display device has at least one symbol display member with a symbol area having plural symbols thereon in the front side. The symbol display member is overlapped with the rotary member.

See also the paragraph spanning pages 3-4 (emphasis

added) :

According to the present invention, since the light emission element array is lighted on and off to display an image by utilizing **afterimage effect** and to determine the result of the game, it is possible to provide various game types as well as various display patterns to improve appeal effect to a player.

See also the paragraph spanning pages 7-8 (emphasis

added) :

The first display plate 21 .... Each of the first to third light emission parts 31, 32 and 33 has twelve light emitting diodes (LEDs) 30 arranged to form an arrow. The first display plate 21 is attached to a first flange 45 that is mechanically connected with a first rotary shaft 40, so that the first display plate 21 is driven to rotate by a first drive motor 42 of the display plate driver 23. When the first display plate 21 rotates, the first to third light emission parts 31, 32 and 33 are lighted on and off at predetermined timings to display messages or symbols based on **afterimage effect**. When the first display plate 21 stops rotating, one of the first to third

light emission parts 31, 32 or 33 is lighted on, or all of the first to third light emission parts 31, 32 or 33 are lighted off. When one of the light emission parts 31, 32 or 33 is lighted on to indicate a number symbol on a display area 22a provided in the periphery of the second display plate 22, the indicated number represents a part of the amount of dividend coins. Note that the number and position of the emitting parts and the LEDs are not limited in the above embodiment but can be arranged appropriately.

See also page 11 (emphasis added) :

The operation of the symbol display device 20 described above is explained. When the player wins the free game, the first and second display plates 21, 22 begin to rotate clockwise (shown by the arrows in Fig. 4). When the rotational speed of the first display plate 21 reaches a predetermined speed, the LEDs 30 of each of the first-third light emission parts 31, 32 and 33 are lighted on and off at predetermined timings. Thereby, messages are displayed in the first display plates 21 by use of afterimage effect. In an example shown in Fig. 4, the message "GO! GO!" by afterimage effect is displayed

while the first and second display plates 21, 22 are rotating. The message in the first display plate 21 improves the display effect in the game. Note that the rotational directions of the first and the second display plates 21 and 22 are not limited in the above embodiment, but they may rotate in opposite directions.

The above passages are examples of the application's disclosures in regards to afterimages, and are believed to illustrate adequate disclosure to meet the enablement requirement, especially in view of the specification referencing Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publications No. H07-000612 and 2002-224265 for a light emission diode (LED) array to display symbols based on afterimage effect and Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-370702 describing a rotary disk type symbol display device for a roulette game machine that displays symbols or messages by utilizing afterimage effect of the LED array.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the enablement rejection are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to remove the recitation to afterimages and as to form. The recitations are otherwise not substantively amended and are intended to have the same scope as

the original claim 1 under a FESTO analysis. The recitations concerning afterimage are now found in new claims 12 and 17-18.

Claim 1 recites a symbol display device for a game machine, comprising 1) at least one symbol display member with a symbol area having plural symbols thereon and 2) a rotary member overlapped with the symbol display member, and 3) on the rotary member, at least one light emission element array, each light emission element array having plural light emission elements. The wherein clause reads that when the rotary member stops rotating, the light emission elements of the at least one light emission element array are lighted on to indicate one symbol of the symbol display member and/or to display a specific symbol.

As to PICKARDT et al., inner wheel 15 is a rotatable disc with plural symbols thereon. The recitation of a symbol display member is being read onto inner wheel/rotatable disc 15.

The next recitation of claim 1 is to a rotary member having the light emission element array. The Official Action read this recitation onto element 17 of PICKARDT et al.

Attention is directed to page 7 of PICKARDT et al., beginning at line 8. There it is disclosed that a circle of arrows 17, formed from illuminatable arrow panels 18, surround

disc 15. "To simulate an arrow 19 rotating around the disc 15, an arrow panel 18, which serves as the start panel 20, is extinguished, and subsequently the following arrow panels 18 are extinguished in a stepwise manner in the direction of arrow 21."

From this disclosure, it is clear that element 17 is not a rotary member, as the individual arrow panels 18 remain fixed and are selectively lighted on and off to create the illusion of motion.

Each of arrow panels 18 would correspond to one of the recited "at least one light emission element array". Note, however, there is no disclosure that the arrow panels 18 are comprised of "plural light emission elements", as recited.

Further, the wherein clause recitation of "when the rotary member stops rotating," is not met as element 17 does not include a rotary member. Similarly, although one arrow panel 18 may remain lighted on, there is no disclosure found that indicates the arrow panel 18 comprises "the light emission elements of the at least one light emission element array".

Thus, as the reference fails to disclose each recited element of claim 1, the claim cannot be anticipated. Allowance of claim 1 is solicited.

Further, applicant does not see disclosure that the plural light emission elements of the at least one light emission element array are each light emitting diodes formed in a light emitting diode array (as per claim 19).

Still further, the claim 12 recitation of "wherein, the light emission elements are lighted on and off to display symbols or messages by utilizing afterimage effect while the rotary member is rotating" is not disclosed by PICKARDT et al. page 7, lines 13-25 as this passage merely discloses selectively illuminating the arrow panels 18 and there is no teaching of the afterimage effect being utilized.

See also claim 4, reciting that "wherein the light emission element arrays turn the light on and off sequentially when the rotary member stops rotation." As discussed, element 17 does not rotate. Nor is there any light emission element arrays that turn on and off upon the rotary member stopping rotation.

Thus, claim 4 is believed patentable in its own right.

New claims 13-14 are based on the subject matter indicated to be allowable (claims 5 and 7). Allowance of these claims is also solicited.

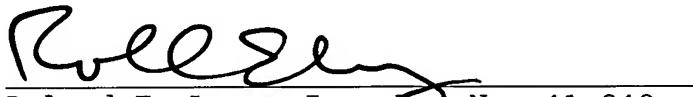
Application No. 10/625,523  
Amdt. Dated July 15, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of May 4, 2004  
Docket No. 8012-1203

In view of the above, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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